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Senate Approves More for Jobless

Senate Majority Takes Advantage of Money Provided By President Bush for Unemployed

LANSING – The state Senate today approved legislation that would allow workers to continue getting unemployment payments while looking for a job, Sen. Valde Garcia, R-Howell, said.

“It is important to provide working families support while they look for jobs in today’s market,” Garcia said. “Money has been made available through the efforts of President Bush and should be appropriated to offer workers additional benefits.”

On May 28, 2003, President George W. Bush signed legislation allowing for the continuation of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation program, which provides up to 13 weeks of federally funded jobless benefits to workers who exhaust all of their state unemployment benefits. The TEUC had been scheduled to end on May 31, 2003, but the new legislation continues the program until the end of December 2003. Jobless workers must claim their first week of TEUC by December 27, 2003, in order to receive their full entitlement.

The Bureau of Workers and Unemployment Compensation which administers the state’s unemployment system, estimates that the legislation would provide \$206 million to an approximately 53,000 long-term unemployed workers in the state.

To qualify for the temporary extended benefits under HB 4945 (H-2), unemployed workers must:

- Have exhausted their state benefits;
- Have received their last unemployment check for the week ending on, or after, May 24, 2003; and
- Submit an application for extended benefits with the BWUC.

The \$206 million to unemployed workers is comprised of:

- \$181 million in federal program funds;
- \$23 million from surplus revenue in the UI Trust Fund’s “non-chargeable” account (the Trust Fund currently has a total balance of \$1.6 billion); and
- \$1.75 million from revenue in the UI’s penalty and interests account. This one-time transfer would be reimbursed with an appropriation of \$1.75 million from the General Fund in FY 2004-05.

“Michigan must continue to help workers who are seeking to earn a living by their own merit, with the additional support they need right now,” Garcia said.